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MONARCH SOCIAL CLUB NEWSLETTER

VOLUME II – ISSUE 3

(WORKING FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL CROSSDRESSERS/BIGENDERAL COMMUNITY)

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Monarch Social Club

VOLUME II – ISSUE 3

FROM YOUR EDITOR:

Well we're back after a couple months of very busy times. If you have an hour ar so, I'll let you know all the many things that have happened in my busy life. Thanks for being patient. It will take a couple of newsletters to get caught up, so if you have submitted any articles, not printed in this issue, they will appear in the next issue. For those of you that haven't sent anything in we welcome all submissions. Just sent them to the regular club mailing address.

NEWSLETTER:

Our search for a new editor has not resulted in a replacement but we are continuing to look. In the interim we have an outside typing service, which has reduced my time significantly.

PARTY ... PRIVATE HOUSE ... POOL!

Saturday June 20th it's a private party for Monarch members and their guests. Come early, enjoy the patio and pool and party with your sisters and friends until you drop. BYOB and food for the BBQ and a sleeping bag if you plan to stay overnight.

Fetish Night is Thursday night and we plan a Tupperware Party (?) for Friday night. Plan to enjoy a couple of days if you can.

LOCATION: Its at Willi's in Mississauga, so please call the club number (416) 949–6602, if you plan to attend. Its going to be a good weekend

YEARBOOK:

Dawn is looking for submissions (member profile, pictures, stories, etc.) so get busy and put something together and mail it to the club address.

MARDI GRAS '92 (6th ANNUAL):

Plans are well underway for this year's Mardi Gras. The location has yet to be finalized, but we have a place, which will hold approximately 60, reserved. Cost will be approximately $200 based on shared accomodation and there is a possiblity that we maybe able to obtain a weekly rate for those interested. All Monarch Members, significant others and friends are invited. If you are interested in this OCTOBER 2–4 weekend event, please contact Willi at (416) 949–6602.

EXECUTIVE MEETING: SATURDAY JUNE 20th, 2:00 P.M. at WILLI'S. ALL WELCOME.

Monarch Social Club
Mississauga "A"
P.O. Box 386
Mississauga, Ontario
L5A 3A1
416–949–6602

Melissa (Editor)
Willamina (Associate Editor)
Ruby (Associate Editor)

YOUR EDITORIAL STAFF

International Foundation for Gender Education
TV-TS TAPESTRY PUBLICATIONS
P.O. BOX 367, WAYLAND, MA 01778

OFFICE: 6 CUSHING ST., 2nd FL., WALTHAM, MA 02154
617-894-8340/899-2212

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FROM: the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE)

THE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR GENDER EDUCATION PRESENTS THE CROSS-GENDER COMMUNITY TO THE AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

Waltham, May 11, 1992:

"We have gone to the mountain, and we have been heard!" declared Nancy Cole, Vice Chairperson of the IFGE Board of Directors.

The mountain was the 145th annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), which was held in Washington DC, May 2nd through May 7th, 1992. More than 14,000 psychiatrists from around the world were introduced to IFGE, and thousands stopped at IFGE's booth to receive an information packet, to review the publications, and for one-on-one conversations.

"It was amazing," exclaimed Merissa Lynn, the IFGE Executive Director. "I personally talked with psychiatrists from China, Russia, Turkey, and Iran. I had one doctor break down and start crying, and another one who had a berdache from the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota. In four days we reached more professional people who needed our information than we could ever have hoped. In addition," Merissa continued, "most of them had gender conflicted clients, which means we reached their clients as well."

IFGE's presence at the APA convention was the first time any organization or service from the gender community had ever exhibited at this meeting. This historic event was made possible through the efforts of professionals from within the gender community who saw the tremendous importance of IFGE reaching out to mental and medical health professionals. They contributed their time, their expertise, and their money to make this presence possible. Another contributor, Delia Wolfe, helped IFGE build a display that was on a par with the best displays at the convention.

Besides Nancy and Merissa, IFGE was represented by Yvonne Cook-Riley, Director of Operations; Dr. Sheila Kirk, Director of Research; Laura Caldwell, a Trustee of the Winslow Street Endowment Fund; JoAnn Roberts, Board of Directors; and Alison Laing, Chairperson of the Congress of Representatives. They handed literature to and talked with a constant parade of convention participants, many of whom returned to the booth several times, often

bringing others with them. That IFGE made a favorable impression was evidenced by the fact that IFGE was one of only two exhibitors (out of a total of over 300) mentioned by name in a Washington Post article, and that the APA staff made a point of personally inviting IFGE back to next year's APA convention to be held in San Francisco.

Further evidence of IFGE's impact came from the comments made. Comments like, "You cannot know how happy I am to see you here," and, "It's about time! You belong here," and, "I wish I had known about you sooner," were not uncommon.

IFGE had accomplished what it set out to do, to reach the psychiatrists who affect the lives of cross-gendered people. "This is only a beginning," stated Nancy Cole. "The total effect of our efforts will never truly be known, but we do know we belong there, and at other such gatherings of professional organizations. After years of patiently waiting to be heard, we have a forum and have found that there are those out there who are willing and ready to listen."

"This project was completely funded by contributions," said Yvonne Cook. "If we are going to continue reaching out to professionals, we are going to continue to need financial support. If anyone is interested, please contact Dr. Sheila Kirk, c/o IFGE, P.O. Box 367, Wayland, MA 01778, or call: 617-899-2212."

- 30 -

Monarch Social Club

VOLUME II – ISSUE 3

CROSSDRESSERS AND THE LAW

For those that are so inclined, and probably to be more realistic, that are wondering what the status of our preferred lifestyle is with the authorities, I have been collecting bits and pieces of data over the last six months on the topic of Transvestism versus the law. After discussing and listening to those that are familiar with the law from the point of view as a former police officer and a barmaid that deals with crossdressers very frequently, I managed to draw up some basic guidelines and clarify some aspects here and there before you get your butt thrown in jail.

Basically speaking, dressing in women's clothes is not in of itself illegal. However, where you go when dressed does have some legal implications. By Michigan State law, it is illegal for a crossdresser to use the ladies' washroom in any public establishment even if the management permits crossdressers on the premises at any given time. The status of this is a crossdresser is still a man no matter how passable, femine, or otherwise, he may look or act, as far as bathroom access is concerned. A crossdresser entering a ladies' washroom is just as much a male entering a ladies washroom and can be arrested, ticketed, and even held in custody until he posts bond and may face a jail term of up to ninety days if convicted. Yes, there are many crossdressers that do use the ladies' washroom and are getting away with it. whether Canadian or Ontario law is different or just might not be enforced, a crossdresser is taking his chances when going into a ladies washroom in an unfamiliar establishment, and could risk the previously mentioned legal aftermath. If you run into a situation where the management bars you from the ladies' room, don't argue. They may call the police if you start any backtalk or don't immediately comply. They also have the legal right to kick you out of the place altogether under the "we reserve the right to refuse service to anyone" jurisdication based on old English Common Law.

For the most part, when frequenting public places, the "we reserve..." rule is usually the main status as whether they are or are not going to permit crossdressers in their bar, cafe, store, etc., of which they can legally prosecute under. A recent situation in my area saw two crossdressers getting hauled down to the County Jail after making one too many attempts to get served in a straight bar that had already told them to leave. Their bond was set at a $100 and one didn't get out until a friend showed up with the money. They were later fined a couple of hundred dollars and got six months probation. If the incident occurred again, they would be looking at thirty days in jail.

Fortunately, most crossdressers rarely get incarcerated mainly because they usually check out the place before entering and when not permitted, leave right then and there, which at that time, they have not broken any law. Alot of us are too afraid to go out in public anyway, so maybe shyness is blessed.

However, if the management decides themselves to permit crossdressers, there is not much legal jurisdiction from preventing them from such, except for perhaps only in places that minors are not permitted, if even that. Just recently, a group of crossdressers, including myself, went on a shopping trip to a ladies' appearal store after being invited by the owner who happened to know the woman that sponsors the club. Although it was night, the owner said we could come back anytime when dressed if we wanted to shop there (she wants the business). This is completely legal to do, because the owner elected to take the option from the "we reserve..." rule, and there is no law otherwise forbidding crossdressers from being there.

When driving a car, perhaps going out on the town, usually doesn't present a problem, unless you get pulled over. Most of the time, you don't get pulled over unless you are speeding, have a bad taillight, or look like you are drunk. But, should it happen, you will have to show a valid driver's license. To avoid complications, make sure you have no outstanding traffic tickets or there may be a bench warrant out for your arrest and the police will haul you in to the station to pay up the arrears wearing silk

Monarch Social Club

VOLUME II – ISSUE 3

CROSSDRESSERS AND THE LAW (cont'd)

gown, wig and all!

When dealing with police, as I was informed by an ex–officer, don't volunteer any information like where you are going and what you are up to. Just answer his questions as simple and short as possible. There is nothing illegal about driving when crossdressed unless your vision is obstucted from too large a wig or you are dressed indecently. Police are generally not out to get you for being a crossdresser, they are just interested in upholding the law. Don't make a big fuss about it and they won't either.
I, myself, was in a car with a friend late at night when we were pulled over, and besides a few smart–aleck remarks from one of the cops (the other thought I was cute), we didn't get hassled except they told us to move on, which is all they usually say anyway. My friend happened to retort the officer's comment, and that seemed to shut him up. I was also asked for ID once, but was not driving, so I told them I had none. I was afraid there was a bench warrant out for me. Since I was not driving, I didn't have to show a license, and again, all the cop said was "move on". Both of these incidents occurred late at night, and compared to the wierdos and other trouble the police see at that hour, we don't seem to faze them much.

EDITORS NOTE: I have personally been involved or heard of at least 5 encounters with the police in and around the TO area. There has been no problem with any of them.

I heard a story when someone went out at night crossdressed for the first time and was spotted instantly by a police officer, who told him to "get off the street or I will arrest you". This happened about 35 years ago, when things were not so liberal. The hard part of the story is the guy was so scared that he never went out in public crossdressed to this dam day. Don't let a scrap with the cops cause a lifelong traumatic experience. Most police would agree we might be wierd, but you don't have to get that uptight about it.

In closing, I would like to remind everyone that the police are merely enforcing the law as they see it and most of them never have been to college, let alone Law School, so what do they know. If you get ticketed or arrested, remember it is the judge that will be determining the crime and you can usually work things out provided you don't start any trouble. Refrain from backtalk and get yourself a lawyer. We don't live in Communist countries, so our preferred life style may not always be acceptable, but we shouldn't be incarcerated for it either.

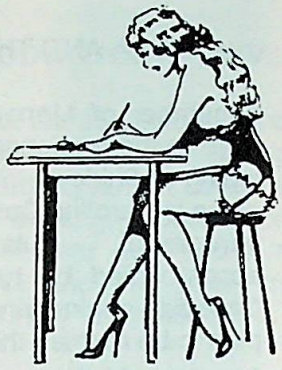
R U B Y J E N S E N

TRANSSEXUALISM LINKED to BIRTH PROBLEMS (SOURCE –TORONTO STAR)

Transsexuals may be products of difficult births, a study by a University of British Columbia team suggests. Problems at birth, including prematurity, prolonged labor and low birth weight "somehow affected the wiring or the development of the brains" of transsexuals, psychology professor Stanley Coren and Dr. Diane Watson found after studying 45 men awaiting sex–change operations at the Vancouver General Hospital.

Monarch Social Club
VOLUME II – ISSUE 3

"ASK BETTY"



Ask Betty is the creation of Rachael and Gerry of REM Studio.

Hi, Betty here with some more tips on the feminine figure created by temporary and permanent body feminization. We will discuss corsetting, the use of padding, illusion and we will touch on clothing that feminizes.

Corsetting is my personal fetish and hobby so I'll impart my knowledge to you. (note that my new header for the column is corsetted!) Corsettes should by made to measure for health and comforts sake so avoid buying off the rack and spend. B&R Studio in the states makes reasonable custom fit corsettes in everything from lace and satin to leather. (orders can be placed through R.E.M. Studio at 694–1792 with sizing). If you wish to lose up to 4" on your waist and emphasize your hips use a corset but DO NOT GO DOWN MORE THAN 4" FOR YOUR FIRST WEARINGS. After that if you choose to waist train for more permanent results leading to a feminized figure go down with your new corset 2" per new corset order and your heath will remain intact and you will receive slow but impressive results in waist reduction. (I have gone from a 38" waist to a 24" through diet, excercise and extensive corsetting!) Check it out the results are astounding. Since I wrote this section I personally have ordered a custom made corset from B.R. Creations and will give you an update when it comes in and I have been told it is a lengthy wait (2–3 mos.) A bit of news , there may be a Corsetting chapter formed from a local **fetish club and crossdressers are more** than welcome.....maybe we can get together a corset exchange as we reduce. Corsets are pricey. If any one wants an order form for B.R. give me a call at 694–1792. Soon we will have fabric swatches to look at.

Legs are another concern for the cross–dresser. To shave or not to shave that is the question. If you are unable to shave your legs due to life's circumstances you can wear flesh coloured tights under your nylons or pantyhose or simply 2 or more pairs (until the hair is hidden) of pantyhose layered for wear. Now for the question of shape. This can be done with the choice of heels and hose. A narrow high heel will shape and feminize the leg. A darker color of hose such as carcoal or off–black will narrow the leg and take away bulk and lopped with fish nets (if the outfit allows) will define the shape in a flattering way.

Acrilic artificial nails are a seldom chosen form of body modification but do I have news for you. They have a system out called Back Scratchers which can be used to strenghten your nail, lengthen them and feminize the natural shape. Best of all they look so natural that you can wear them without polish if you are brave enough to sport longer nails to work etc. The only draw back is that if you choose to remove them the underlying nail is soft and tears easily.

Permanent body feminization is an extreme but I will touch on the more common and least drastic of these. Some crossdressers prefer to fight less with their beards and decide to have it thinned by electrolysis. This is a time consuming, expensive process with permanent satisfaction. This MUST be done through a certified, qualified practitioner. If this is not done with an experienced electologist permanent scarring can occur. (I am a certified electologist and am very picky on this point because I have seen my share of scarring done by an unqualifeid hand).

"ASK BETTY" (cont'd)

Some types of permanent cosmetic feminization are (note this is not a recommendatoin just information) traceal shaves (removal of the Adam,s apple runs about $500. and can be done on an out patient basis. The contraversial breast implant runs about $1200 and up (small ones can be hidden under a tight tee–shirt. Believe it or not you can also have your ears reshaped and I do not have a quote on that but I do know that if your ears are causing emotional distress OHIP will foot the costs. A nose job runs from about $700 and up and if you have broken your nose in the past you may be able to get OHIP to pay for a deviated septum repair. I will stop this section before I cross the line from cross–dresser to gender dysphoria..... where ever that line is.

Things that I would suggest to stay away from are loose silicone in any part of the body for reshaping to feminize, or for any reason.
Please, please do not get lip liner, eyeliner or blush tatooed IT LOOKS VERY UNNATURAL AND LIMITS YOUR OPTION TO CHANGE YOUR STYLE.

Finally there are the cheapest ways to feminze with the best results. Stay healthy.... eat well (low fats etc.) exercise to tuck in the waist and a major rule of thumb is to drink at least eight glasses of water each day. Avoid excess alcohol we all know about smoking! Smoking encourages those little vertical lines around the mouth like Dolly Parton's kids, SORRY THEIR LINES WERE CAUSED FROM BREAST FEEDING AND THEY WERE STRETCH MARKS (HA! HA!).

This topic can go on forever....and I can answer further questions if you drop me a line with specific questions and I will answer them in this newsletter.

Keep the letters coming

Until next time

TULA AND THE SHIRLEY SHOW

A number of Monarch members and friends were in the audience, most en femme, for the taping of Shirley's interview with Tula. Her real name is Caroline Cossey and she is a post–op transsexual. Tula is 37 and she was accompanied by her fiance David Finch, a Canadian engineering student who is 27. They plan to be married this summer.

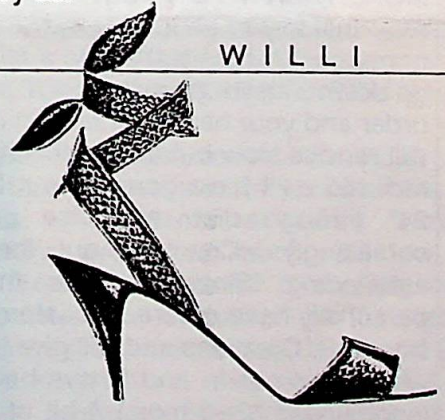
Tula has worked as a model, dancer, appeared in a James Bond movie and author. Born in England, she has a very attractive and supportive sister still living there who was connected by telephone to participate in the show.

During the show Tula came across as a bright, intelligent person with a good sense of humor. She handled herself very well and answered questions from Shirley and the audience in a very professional manner no matter how foolish they were.

She has published a book called "My Story" which details her life including a previous short marriage as well as her time in the Persian Gulf where an oil baron wanted her to become his 6th wife.

It was a Sunday afternoon enjoyed by all in attendance in downtown Toronto. The program was shown on TV ten days later and has been taped by us.

W I L L I



CARLA DOES DOWNTOWN OAKVILLE

Hi, my name is Carla. I'm 35 years old and I've been cross–dressing for about 27 years, going out in public for about 2 years. It seems every time is different and exciting. I joined Monarch Social Club about a year ago and it really helped meeting Willi and the other cross–dressers. It's the old story – I'm not alone.

I work shifts so with my job I have the pleasure of playing through the day when no one is around. On this particular day I got up early and as soon as the wife and kids were out the door I was at it. It was one of those days where I was going to play around and try a few things out. After a close shave with Soft Sense shaving gel I was ready to try a few outfits on. I decided on a white blouse with dashes of different colors through it, a basic black skirt just above the knee and black hose. Now was the fun part, making up my face to look like the woman I want to be.

So here I am completely dressed with no plans at all when the phone rang. We have our home listed for sale and that phone call was the real estate wanting to show our house at 12 noon and it's 11:30 now. I had three choices: I could say no; I could say later on in the day or I could say to come through. I chose the latter, deciding to go out. Since we had a lockbox on the door, I didn't have to be home.

Dressing up and going out the door, the excitement started to grow. My usual choice would be a mall browsing in Eatons or some place like that, but today it was going to be downtown Oakville. It's really safer than it sounds because a lot of the shoppers are wealthy, older ladies.

I have a garage door opener so getting out is a little easier. As I'm getting into the car, I notice my son's papers out by the road, thought 'what the hell', walk down the driveway, retrieve the papers and put them in the garage (heart just pounding). Well I don't know about you girls, but that was a pretty risky thing to do.

Finally I'm off and drive to the underground parking about one block from downtown. Even though I've done this before, I'm still nervous as hell and sit in the car for a bit. I think when the lighter pops, I'm outa here. The lighter pops and I'm still there for another 10 minutes.

Here goes nothing! I'm out on the street with just a short walk to town. It was a fairly cool, damp day so I wore black flat–heeled boots that came just above my ankle and a navy blue coat about mid– calf in length.

My first encounter was an older lady in front of a flower shop who noticed me standing beside her, went on to tell me the history of a few plants in the window. The next stop was T.D. Bank just to get a balance up–date because I had enough money on me. Next stop was about half way through town for a smoke on the town bench.

I know the rules here, always look straight ahead and no eye contact but I found myself checking out other people from window reflections. So far I felt like I was passing because I was fitting in so well and no staring as far as I noticed. Now it's smoke time on the bench. Using my best femme voice, I asked a passing lady the time and with a smile she said, "Of course". With a big confident smile, I said "Thank you". Time to move on. My goal was to walk completely through town and I was half–way at this point. Looking up the sidewalk ahead of me, I saw six teenage boys (detour time). This detour circled me around and brought me to the furthest part of town ready for my return trail back.

After a lot of window shopping it was time to make a purchase. A Card shop with two older ladies looked like a safe bet. As I stepped into the store, I was greeted with a big warm smile and a cheerful hello. Checking out all the different cards I chose an Easter card for my mate. It came to $3.75 and checking into my purse I was going to give her a $50 bill, but came across a couple of $2's. This may not seem important now, but read on. With another big smile, she said, "Thanks, dear" and I left the

CARLA DOES DOWNTOWN OAKVILLE (CONT'D)

store.

Out on the street again, I noticed a lady sitting on a bench waiting for the bus. Thinking it was a good place for a smoke break, I sat down beside her and with a big smile and my best femme voice, said "hi". Our conversation went from the weather to her life story. During our conversation (mostly her talking) many people went by. There were a few tense moments when a couple of groups of guys went by figuring it was two ladies chatting at a bus stop. I'm not really sure how long it was, but as the bus pulled up we exchanged names and she told me what a pleasure it was chatting with me.

I knew I was starting to run low on time but it wasn't too far back to the car so I checked out a little furniture store. The lady at the back of the store said with a smile that if she could help me with anything just to let her know. This store was full of mirrors and I was enjoying viewing myself. As I left she said, "Thanks, dear. Bye for now".

The cafe next door looked inviting so I went inside and got a coffee and then sat out front drinking it while watching lots of traffic go by.

When I got back to the underground, in my excitement I wasn't sure where I'd left the car. I went to the spot where I thought it was, but no car even came close. It's been a fun day, I'm thinking to myself, but calm down and think this over as I'm wandering around the parking garage. Did someone steal it, did it get towed away? After a few more rounds of the garage I came across my car and I could have kissed it.

So here it is about 2 p.m. and I'm freaking. I have to be home and changed in one–half hour. I get to the parking attendant and he wants $2.20 so I give him a $50 bill and he says, "Sorry lady, the most I can take is a $20 as he points to the sign in the window. I say, "That's all I have and he says, "Sorry, but you'll have to back up, park and go to the bank and change it."

After parking again I go to the bank in the fastest femme walk I can, skip the teller and get $20 out of the Green Machine. Now I'm back at my car and I can't find my ticket. Oh well, he'll remember me and he did. Now I'm thinking if I hadn't bought that Easter card I'd have the change for parking.

It's 2:15 now and I have to be home and changed by 2:30. I dash in the door and as much as I hated to take it all off, by 2:45 I was completely back in my male self having a vodka and soda sitting at the kitchen table reading the Toronto Sun. As it turned out, I had another half hour until my wife came home. She asked me how my day went and I told her it was kind of a drag.

C a r l a

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LETTERS

Hi Ladies – Club Domo was a trip & a half. Makes the one in T.O. look like a kiddie place. Only one thing I missed was a dance floor. This one had all live shows & booths for playing – not a social club in that respect. Got to Schwarze Mode & it was 2 rooms – the book room was the best part & had a large selection world wide pubs (& in English). In the Black Forest region & then back to Amsterdam for Easter (actually Den Hague) as well. Enjoy your Spring Party – not much on transvestism over here (at least not in public). One good thing, price wise my PVC is same or less. The shoes and boots in Schwarze Mode are higher than T.O. – so Canada is coming ahead in the prices.

Deb [Pyke]

Letter to the Editor:

I feel that I must comment on the article "Estrogen is blamed; Transsexual found to be at high risk for breast cancer" from Volume II – Issue 2.

As a person who is taking estrogen and a member of this club, I feel I must express extreme disappointment and outrage that the editorial staff would print an article of this nature. Perhaps there is a motive to enhance the fears of male to female transsexuals. I believe that if the Monarch Social Club is going to move into the field of medical advice for transsexuals, then it must ensure that adequate research of the the article has been done, otherwise the editorial staff is printing speculation and working against the goals of our community.

The article you chose to print is indeed very poorly researched in that the number of people surveyed being 31 is far too low to form a valid conclusion. In checking with my doctor, he stated that any study of people under the number of 200 is just not enough to form a conclusion and must always be compared to those who do not take estrogen.

The article also leaves the impression that male to female transsexuals blindly take estrogen without medical supervision. I'm sure that some may be foolish enough to indulge in 'black market' purchasing of hormones but the vast majority see a doctor to not only prescribe estrogen but to also do the necessary follow–up. Blood work is mandatory every 3 months as are regular physical exams.

I do not want to leave the impression that I do not fear the risk of breast cancer and the correlation between any other type of cancer but please,the last thing one needs or deserves is fears enhanced by the printing of material not properly researched and documented in medical literature.

I believe that if the club wants to explore health issues then it should look at an issue such as smoking which is known to positively link cancer and heart disease to the amount smoked not only to the smoker but also to others affected by secondary smoke.

REBECCA

FROM THE EDITOR:
Rebecca, I don't have a problem with the article and as you know, I may go the same route as you. We just reprinted the article from a usually reliable source. You had an opportunity to comment before publication, why didn't you take advantage of my offer?

FOLLOW UP: BREAST CANCER

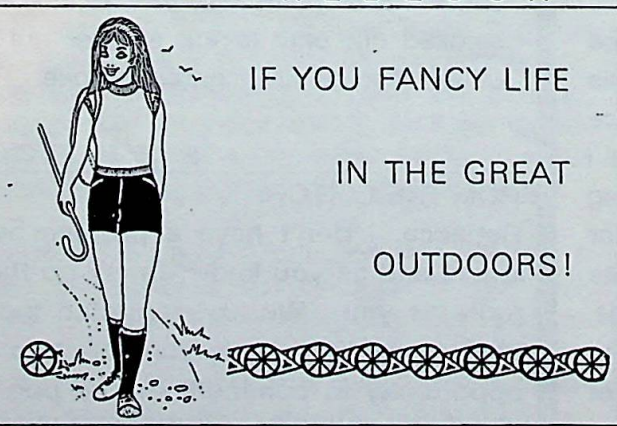
Ironically,the Shirley Show featured a program on breast cancer the day after I received Volume II–Issue 2. I was moved by the women who had the courage to come forward on national TV to share their feelings of intense fear,their battle for survival and to most importantly,provide hope to others.

A federal research study showed 147,939 cases were diagnosed between 1979 and 1991,yet breast cancer research has seemed to take a back seat with funding of 5.0 million dollars when compared to 9.2 million dollars spent on Aids research.

Please do not interpret these statistics to be a criticism of Aids research funding but until the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation was founded by a woman who simply wanted to make a donation for breast cancer research but found no direct organization to contribute her money to, a lobby for breast cancer research, treatment and education did not even exist in Canada for this purpose.

Early detection is the key to survival although most cases of cancer of the breast have been in development for 8–10 years.
Mammography detects cancer in later stages and is most successful for 40% of women under 50. While inroads have been made, there is still a long way to go.

R E B E C C A



THE BANQUET
(Part 1)

(From the memoirs of Nurse Madeline Banister RN)

I looked along the table at the glittering spectacle and thrilled at the colorful display of formal gowns of the ladies, the navy blue and gold of the Royal Navy. The military in khaki and red mess jackets and some famous Scots regiments represented in kilts and tartan. My mind wandered back over the many eventful months which had elapsed since I arrived at Loxley Hall.

I had been a rather nervous young man, dressed as a girl and trying to live as a girl, which was what I always wanted to be. I had been so lucky in securing this position with the help of the Matron at my last hospital. The closing of the infant trauma ward where I had made my debut as a female nurse had cast me "on the beach" as it were. The position of nurse–companion to Sir Stuart St. Johnsons Robin, a seemingly chronic invalid had been a dramatic change from the busy and emotionally demanding work on the infant trauma ward.
Robin had responded so well to my rather spartan regime and his future now looked so promising and the dreadful inertia which had its beginning with the death of his mother sometime ago seemed a thing of the past.

I felt so happy at the way things had gone.
Only Sir Stuart and his mother, the Lady Moira knew of my masquerade. Moira and I had become close friends right from the start, more like sisters than anything else. Moira had a zany, direct way of saying things which always made me smile. I remember one day she asked why I wore a black uniform around the house. "Makes you look like a stick of liquorice."

Sir Stuart's wife, Lady Patricia, a chronic alcoholic had been taken to a sanatorium that morning by Sir Stuart after she had made a vicious attack on me the previous day with a

THE BANQUET (cont'd)

horse whip. I recalled vividly, the door of my room crashing open and Lady Patricia entering the room with a whip in her hand and blood in her eyes. She stopped momentarily on seeing me clad only in corset and stockings, no brassiere and no breasts. This had galvanised her into a frenzy of beating and demands for an explanation.

Mercifully, Forbes, the venerable Forbes the butler had been passing my room and stopped the onslaught, but not before catching a vicious cut across the face himself. I was crouched on the floor with livid wheals across my back, still pathetically trying to conceal the fact that I had no breasts, when Lady Moira arrived to restore order.

The most traumatic part of the affair was psychological, since in retrospect, I had enjoyed being mastered by this autocratic woman who was Sir Stuart's wife. I had felt so terribly ashamed when this realisation came to me. I had felt rather like a remnant from the "Rape of the Sabine Women".

Before the banquet began, Lady Moira, Robin and myself had welcomed the guests arriving at the great door as Sir Stuart had not yet returned. It had been that same iron–studded door from which I had been peremptorily dismissed by Gabriel, the formidable housekeeper saying, "Take the servants' entrance Nurse Banister". I had been saved from this ignominious confrontation by the timely arrival of Sir Stuart on horseback.

Now I looked forward to an exciting evening, probably the most exciting of my life. I was wearing a dream of a dress loaned to me by Moira. It was a creamy satin, full length gown which hugged my figure to just below my hips then flared out into a mass of chiffon with small red bows attached at intervals around the skirt. Small red rosebuds were woven into the fabric of the cloth. A mass of tulle surrounded the topmost part of the dress which effectively concealed my non–existent breasts and one lash mark along the side of my neck. I really had butterflies in my stomach and warned myself to be careful and not drink or eat too much and not to talk too much! Fortunately, I had been schooled by my landlady in Liverpool who had worked as a parlor maid for a famous peer and knew about protocol and the "grand manner".

After greeting guests at the door, Gladys Ponsonby with her harp, "more damned Bach fugues" groaned Moira in an aside to me. The rather heavily made–up, well–known movie star who had, I noted as she passed, a rather dirty neck. She gave me a calculating glance as she passed. Then the gallant Major Smythe, the intrepid balloonist who had terminated his last flight by landing in a sewage farm in Belgium. "Couldn't stand him in the house for a week", snorted his wife Penelope.

Moira introduced me to my dinner partner for the evening. A very clean, scrubbed kind of gentleman of some 55 years, wearing full evening dress of tie and tails and some very impressive medal ribbons. Sir Randolph Scott–Benson introduced him saying, "Randy, meet Madeline, Robin's guide and mentor and your dinner partner".

"I must say Moira, you have been most kind to partner me with such an attractive young woman", he said gallantly. "I am delighted to meet you, sir", I replied as he shook my hand. "Let's find our seats", he said offering me his arm. I threaded mine through his and smiling at each other in a sudden feeling of mutual rapport, seated ourselves at the long table.

The meal progressed smoothly as usual. With Forbes presiding, it could have done little else. After the first couple of courses had been disposed of and a little wine imbibed, conversation became a little polarised here and there in that light–hearted manner which is non–controversial.

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